

settlement plans, and eligible government contractor plans, see sections 104, 105, and 106 of Pub. L. 109-280, set out as notes under section 401 of Title 26, Internal Revenue Code.

SPECIAL RULE FOR CERTAIN BENEFITS FUNDED UNDER AN AGREEMENT APPROVED BY THE PENSION BENEFIT GUARANTY CORPORATION

For applicability of amendment by section 202(b), (c) of Pub. L. 109-280 to a multiemployer plan that is a party to an agreement that was approved by the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation prior to June 30, 2005, and that increases benefits and provides for certain withdrawal liability rules, see section 206 of Pub. L. 109-280, set out as a note under section 412 of Title 26, Internal Revenue Code.

EFFECT OF PUB. L. 103-401 ON OTHER PROVISIONS

Pub. L. 103-401, § 4, Oct. 22, 1994, 108 Stat. 4172, provided that: "Nothing in this Act [amending this section and enacting provisions set out as notes under this section and section 1001 of this title] shall be construed to limit the legal standing of individuals to bring a civil action as participants or beneficiaries under section 502(a) of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (29 U.S.C. 1132(a)), and nothing in this Act shall affect the responsibilities, obligations, or duties imposed upon fiduciaries by title I of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 [this subchapter]."

PLAN AMENDMENTS NOT REQUIRED UNTIL JULY 30, 2002

For provisions directing that if any amendment made by section 306(b) of Pub. L. 107-204 requires an amendment to any plan, such plan amendment shall not be required to be made before the first plan year beginning on or after July 30, 2002, see section 7244(b)(3) of Title 15, Commerce and Trade.

PLAN AMENDMENTS NOT REQUIRED UNTIL JANUARY 1, 1994

For provisions setting forth circumstances under which any amendment to a plan required to be made by an amendment made by section 4301 of Pub. L. 103-66 shall not be required to be made before the first plan year beginning on or after Jan. 1, 1994, see section 4301(d) of Pub. L. 103-66, set out as an Effective Date of 1993 Amendment note under section 1021 of this title.

§ 1133. Claims procedure

In accordance with regulations of the Secretary, every employee benefit plan shall—

- (1) provide adequate notice in writing to any participant or beneficiary whose claim for benefits under the plan has been denied, setting forth the specific reasons for such denial, written in a manner calculated to be understood by the participant, and
- (2) afford a reasonable opportunity to any participant whose claim for benefits has been denied for a full and fair review by the appropriate named fiduciary of the decision denying the claim.

(Pub. L. 93-406, title I, § 503, Sept. 2, 1974, 88 Stat. 893.)

Statutory Notes and Related Subsidiaries

REGULATIONS

Secretary authorized, effective Sept. 2, 1974, to promulgate regulations wherever provisions of this subchapter call for the promulgation of regulations, see section 1031 of this title.

§ 1134. Investigative authority

(a) Investigation and submission of reports, books, etc.

The Secretary shall have the power, in order to determine whether any person has violated or is about to violate any provision of this subchapter or any regulation or order thereunder—

- (1) to make an investigation, and in connection therewith to require the submission of reports, books, and records, and the filing of data in support of any information required to be filed with the Secretary under this subchapter, and

- (2) to enter such places, inspect such books and records and question such persons as he may deem necessary to enable him to determine the facts relative to such investigation, if he has reasonable cause to believe there may exist a violation of this subchapter or any rule or regulation issued thereunder or if the entry is pursuant to an agreement with the plan.

The Secretary may make available to any person actually affected by any matter which is the subject of an investigation under this section, and to any department or agency of the United States, information concerning any matter which may be the subject of such investigation; except that any information obtained by the Secretary pursuant to section 6103(g) of title 26 shall be made available only in accordance with regulations prescribed by the Secretary of the Treasury.

(b) Frequency of submission of books and records

The Secretary may not under the authority of this section require any plan to submit to the Secretary any books or records of the plan more than once in any 12 month period, unless the Secretary has reasonable cause to believe there may exist a violation of this subchapter or any regulation or order thereunder.

(c) Other provisions applicable relating to attendance of witnesses and production of books, records, etc.

For the purposes of any investigation provided for in this subchapter, the provisions of sections 49 and 50 of title 15 (relating to the attendance of witnesses and the production of books, records, and documents) are hereby made applicable (without regard to any limitation in such sections respecting persons, partnerships, banks, or common carriers) to the jurisdiction, powers, and duties of the Secretary or any officers designated by him. To the extent he considers appropriate, the Secretary may delegate his investigative functions under this section with respect to insured banks acting as fiduciaries of employee benefit plans to the appropriate Federal banking agency (as defined in section 1813(q) of title 12).

(d) Evidentiary privilege; confidentiality of communications

The Secretary may promulgate a regulation that provides an evidentiary privilege for, and provides for the confidentiality of communications between or among, any of the following entities or their agents, consultants, or employees: